



IBM CICS Transaction Server for z/OS, V5.3 is further enhanced using continuous delivery and the CICS Transaction Server for z/OS, V5.4 open beta offering is updated

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At a glance

IBM[®] CICS[®] Transaction Server for z/OS[®] (CICS TS) is a powerful, mixed-language application server that is capable of processing hundreds of thousands of business transactions every second.

IBM is committed to a continuous delivery roadmap that delivers regular capability updates for current releases of CICS TS. The following key features are part of this continuous delivery release of CICS TS V5.3:

- Additional Java™ Enterprise Edition (Java EE) 7 features are supported in integrated mode Liberty.
- The LINK and START commands now support invoking Java applications in a Liberty JVM server.
- The Java developer experience is improved, when working with CICS bundles.
- Additional CICS Explorer[®] views and view configuration options are provided.

Additionally, the CICS TS V5.4 open beta offering is refreshed to add major new and enhanced capabilities in the following areas:

- Automated provisioning capabilities that now support the building and running of binary images
- Improved control of applications by using the new asynchronous API
- Ability for applications to pass channels and containers over External CICS Interface (EXCI)

The CICS TS V5.4 open beta offering is available now for clients to provide further feedback on potential future capabilities.

Overview

CICS TS for z/OS, V5.3 continuous delivery

CICS TS for z/OS, V5.3 was generally available in December 2015, and enhanced in July 2016, with the continuous delivery model. CICS TS V5.3 is again updated to deliver a number of new and enhanced capabilities that are delivered by using the standard CICS service channel and continuous delivery model.

Additional Java EE 7 features supported in integrated mode Liberty

In addition to the previously delivered Java Enterprise Edition (EE) 7 Web Profile features¹, the CICS integrated mode Liberty is enhanced to support the following additional, key, Java EE 7 Full Platform features:

- Java Batch 1.0 provides an API for batch applications and a runtime to run and manage batch jobs.
- Batch Management 1.0 provides a Batch REST management interface, job logging support, and a command line utility for external scheduler integration.
- JavaMail™ 1.5 provides an API to connect to a mail server and then send or process mail.

These additional features provide new opportunities to run Java batch applications in CICS, and also the ability for CICS to connect easily to a mail server and send or process emails.

LINK and START commands now support invoking Java applications in a Liberty JVM server

The ability to exchange data between programs that are written in different languages is a core capability of a mixed language application server. Channels and containers are the primary mechanism to exchange large volumes of structured parameter data between CICS programs. Non-Java programs, such as COBOL and PL/I programs, can now perform a LINK command to a CICS Liberty application using channels and containers.

Similarly START commands are also supported, so a non-Java program can START a Java EE application in a CICS Liberty JVM server. START commands allow a CICS program to start a task on a local or remote system, immediately, or at a specified time.

Improved Java developer experience when working with CICS bundles

CICS bundles are a convenient way to package and manage related components, including Java applications, policies, events, web services, and other CICS resources. The CICS Explorer is enhanced to make it easier and quicker to export, install, and remove CICS bundles. These enhancements reduce the number of steps required to perform these operations.

Additional CICS Explorer views and view configuration options

Building on the previously delivered quick filter capabilities in CICS Explorer, clients now have the option to create a permanent view from a temporary quick filter. They can import and export their view configurations to a file on disk. This enables clients to save back ups of their preferred view configurations and to share them easily with other colleagues.

Additionally, system programmers can now manage links between CICS systems in a CICSplex from within CICS Explorer's Systems Management (SM) Administration perspective. System programmers can view the order of groups within a group List to establish which order definitions will be installed during a cold start.

CICS TS V5.4 open beta offering update

The CICS TS V5.4 open beta offering delivers updated capability to allow clients to assess and provide feedback on further, potential future CICS TS capabilities.

Key new features

- Enhanced CICS provisioning toolkit
- Enhanced CICS asynchronous API
- Support for channels and containers over EXCI

Enhanced CICS provisioning toolkit

The CICS provisioning toolkit is a new utility introduced in the CICS TS V5.4 open beta offering to support the rapid provisioning and deprovisioning of CICS environments.

This provisioning toolkit supports the building and running of images, which are binary packages that can be moved between the various stages of the CICS application lifecycle, without change. The required CICS environment and resources are automatically provisioned when the image is run and deprovisioned when no longer required.

The CICS provisioning toolkit builds on the capability provided by z/OSMF workflows to allocate and manage system resources such as data sets and log streams.

Enhanced CICS asynchronous API

The new CICS asynchronous API is a set of commands that is introduced in the CICS TS V5.4 open beta offering to enable application developers to rapidly create asynchronous processing models in their business applications. No additional user-created infrastructure is required to maintain application state.

Application flexibility is provided by the ability to issue services calls simultaneously. This has the potential to reduce the overall response time for an application when calling multiple external services from CICS TS.

Enhancements are made to further integrate the new asynchronous API into the CICS management infrastructure. Security behavior is updated to ensure that child tasks are executed with the security context of the parent task. New association data has been added which allows clients and vendor tools to rapidly identify parent relationships. New monitoring fields now account for the usage of the asynchronous API in online task details and SMF records.

Support for channels and containers over EXCI

The EXCI is an application programming interface that enables an application running outside of CICS in z/OS to link to a CICS application and to pass and receive data from that application. The EXCI is enhanced to add support for CICS channels and containers. This provides a mechanism to exchange large volumes of structured parameter data between batch applications and CICS applications.

EXCI now supports passing a channel and its set of containers when linking to a CICS program from a non-CICS address space. This removes the data-size restrictions that are associated with passing data by using a COMMAREA and also provides the ability to do code page conversion using the container API.

Availability of the CICS TS V5.4 open beta offering

The CICS TS V5.4 open beta offering is available for clients who want to explore potential new CICS capability and assess the value to their business. It can be downloaded free, directly from the [IBM CICS open beta](#) website.

¹ The support for Java applications that exploit Java EE 7 Full Platform features in standard mode and the ability to perform a LINK command from a CICS TS COBOL program to a CICS TS hosted Liberty application, as described in an earlier IBM statement of direction, are partially satisfied by this release of CICS TS V5.3. Full details of the October 2015 general availability release of CICS TS V5.3, and relevant IBM statement of direction, are available in Software Announcement [215-363](#), dated October 5, 2015.

Key prerequisites

CICS TS V5.3 (includes CICS TS Value Unit Edition V5.3 and CICS TS Developer Trial V5.3)

- The minimum required hardware prerequisite is IBM z Systems™ z9^(R) or subsequent 64-bit z/Architecture^(R) processors.
- The minimum required level of operating system is z/OS V1.13 (5694-A01) with APAR OA38409.
- The minimum required level of Java is IBM 64-bit SDK for z/OS, Java Technology Edition, V7.0 SR1.

CICS TS V5.4 open beta offering

- The minimum required hardware prerequisite is z Systems™ z10™ or subsequent 64-bit z/Architecture processors.
- The minimum required level of operating system is z/OS V2.1.
- The minimum required level of Java is IBM 64-bit SDK for z/OS, Java Technology Edition, V7.0 SR1.

Planned availability date

The majority of CICS TS V5.3 continuous delivery enhancements that are presented in this announcement are available now. The remainder of the continuous delivery enhancements will be available no later than December 30, 2016.

The CICS TS V5.4 open beta offering is available now for clients who want to explore potential new CICS capability and assess the value to their business.

Description

CICS TS V5.3 update with continuous delivery

CICS TS V5.3 is further updated by using a continuous delivery method, which was first delivered on July 12, 2016². CICS TS V5.3 was generally available on December 11, 2015³.

CICS TS is a powerful, mixed-language application server, which is capable of processing hundreds of thousands of business transactions every second, as described in IBM Redbook [IBM CICS Performance Series: CICS TS V5.3 Benchmark on IBM z13™](#). IBM is committed to a continuous delivery roadmap for CICS TS, with regular capability updates to be made available on current releases. The following key features are supported on this continuous delivery release of CICS TS V5.3:

- Additional Java EE 7 features that are supported in integrated mode Liberty
- LINK and START commands that are now supported by invoking Java applications in a Liberty JVM server
- Improved Java developer experience when working with CICS bundles
- Additional CICS Explorer views and view configuration options

Additional Java EE 7 features supported in integrated mode Liberty

In addition to the Java EE 7 Web Profile features, the CICS integrated mode Liberty is enhanced to support:

- Java Batch 1.0
- Batch Management 1.0
- JavaMail 1.5 from the Java EE 7 Full Platform

Batch processing refers to the scheduling and execution of a series of jobs and steps to efficiently process large volumes of data. The Java Batch 1.0 feature implements the programming model for batch applications and provides a runtime to run and manage batch jobs. The Batch Management 1.0 feature includes a Batch REST

management interface, job logging support, and a command line utility for external scheduler integration.

The Java batch job in CICS has full access to resources and programs. The programming model encourages updates to be committed at regular intervals. This means that locks are not held unnecessarily and failures can be picked up and restarted from the last checkpoint. These features provide new opportunities to run batch in CICS alongside online transactions.

The JavaMail 1.5 feature provides an API and protocol-independent framework to write applications that connect to a mail server and send or process emails. The feature includes support to allow interacting with mail servers that use the Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP), Internet Message Access Protocol (IMAP), and Post Office Protocol (POP3) transports. This enables CICS applications to send simple text emails, use more comprehensive HTML formatting, and attach documents.

The LINK and START commands now support invoking Java applications in a Liberty JVM server

Non-Java programs, such as COBOL and PL/I programs, can now perform a LINK command to a CICS Liberty application by using channels and containers. The LINK command now supports:

- Invoking a Java EE application in a Liberty JVM server
- Passing a CICS channel along with its containers.

When invoked, the Java application runs by using the Distributed Program Link (DPL) subset and within the same unit-of-work (UOW) as the calling program, so updates made to recoverable CICS resources are in the same transaction.

Additionally, START commands are supported so that, for example, a non-Java program such a COBOL or PL/I program, can START a Java EE application in a CICS Liberty JVM server. START commands allow a CICS program to start a task on a local or remote system immediately, or at a specified time.

To enable invocation of a Java application in a Liberty JVM server, a new CICS defined annotation @ CICS Program is used. When placed in the code of a target Java EE application, this annotation identifies the method as an invocation target and correlates it with a chosen CICS PROGRAM name. When the Java application is installed in an integrated-mode Liberty JVM server, the PROGRAM resource is dynamically installed ready for use. Therefore, no additional program installation is required.

The J CICS APIs can be used in the application to work with the passed channel and containers, or start data. All CICS Liberty supported Java EE APIs can be used within the application. The Java application is required to be a web project packaged in a Web ARchive (WAR) or Enterprise ARchive (EAR).

Improved Java developer experience when working with CICS bundles

- The CICS Explorer is enhanced to make it easier and quicker to export, install, and remove CICS bundles.
- For each project, the CICS Explorer wizard, *Export Bundle Project to z/OS UNIX™ File System*, now remembers where the bundle was exported.
- When performing an action, such as an install, if only one target is available then this target is automatically preselected.
- To help when updating an OSGi Java project in CICS, a combined Disable And Discard action is available on some installed resources that include CICS bundles.

Additional CICS Explorer views and view configuration options

Quick filters and other temporary view configuration settings can now be stored as a permanent view configuration by using a toolbar icon in the view toolbar. Additionally, when using the View Configuration Preferences, unsaved updates are flagged by using an asterisk indicator.

Clients can now import and export view configurations to a file on disk. They can also save back-ups of their preferred view configurations and to share view configurations with other colleagues. The import and export actions are available from the Eclipse preferences, within CICS Explorer View configurations.

The System Links view is now available in the SM Administration perspective that allows system programmers to manage links between CICS systems in a CICSplex from within CICS Explorer. CICS System Definition (CSD) group entries are now sorted in sequence, rather than alphabetical order in the CICSplex Repositories view, which is nested within each region. This makes it easier to establish the order in which definitions will be installed during a cold start.

Availability of CICS TS V5.3 continuous delivery enhancements

The following table provides details on the continuous delivery enhancements made available in this updated release of CICS TS V5.3. Many of these enhancements are available now, with the remainder being made available no later than December 30, 2016. Check the availability method for details.

Capability	Availability method
Additional Java EE 7 features supported in integrated mode Liberty	See CICS TS V5.3 APAR PI63005 .
The LINK and START commands now support invoking Java applications in a Liberty JVM server	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See CICS TS V5.3 APAR PI63005. • CICS Explorer V5.3.0.8, which is available on the Mainframe Developer Center and Aqua update website, is required by Java developers to use the new @CICSProgram annotation. • CICS build toolkit V5.3.0.8 is required by build systems to build CICS bundles that include Java applications that use the new @CICSProgram annotation.
Improved Java developer experience when working with CICS bundles	CICS Explorer V5.3.0.8, which is available on the Mainframe Developer Center and Aqua update website , is required.
Additional CICS Explorer views and view configuration options	

CICS TS V5.4 open beta offering

The CICS TS V5.4 open beta offering is updated with new and enhanced capabilities. It includes all of the features in this latest CICS TS V5.3 continuous delivery release, and adds the following important new and enhanced capabilities:

- Enhanced CICS provisioning toolkit
- Enhanced CICS asynchronous API
- Support for channels and containers over EXCI

Enhanced CICS provisioning toolkit

The CICS provisioning toolkit is a new utility introduced in the CICS TS V5.4 open beta offering to support the rapid provisioning and deprovisioning of CICS environments. This toolkit is enhanced to support the building and running of images. An image is a binary package that can be moved between the various stages of the CICS application lifecycle without any changes. The required CICS environment and resources are automatically provisioned when the image is run and deprovisioned when no longer required.

The CICS provisioning toolkit builds on the capability provided by z/OSMF workflows to allocate and manage system resources, such as datasets and log streams.

New CICS provisioning toolkit commands are introduced to manage images and provisioned CICS environments:

- 'cicspt build' command for packaging an application or service into a binary image
- 'cicspt images' and 'cicspt inspect' commands for managing images
- 'cicspt start' and 'cicspt stop' commands to manage the underlying CICS environment
- 'cicspt run' command is enhanced to support images

Several different service and application scenarios are supported through samples that are included with the toolkit. It includes sample cicsptfiles and pre-built images for z/OS Connect based RESTful microservices, and also for XML-based SOAP web services and other CICS Liberty applications.

The build command can be used in conjunction with other tools like the CICS TS build toolkit to build an automated deployment pipeline.

The CICS provisioning toolkit, which is provided with the CICS TS V5.4 open beta offering, is also compatible with CICS TS V5.2 and CICS TS V5.3.

Enhanced CICS asynchronous API

The CICS asynchronous API provides a set of new API commands that enable application developers to rapidly create asynchronous processing models in their business applications. The following enhancements are made to further integrate this new API into the CICS management infrastructure:

- The security model is updated to ensure that the security context of the parent task is adhered to when executing a child task, by using the RUN TRANSID command.
- Task association data is extended to identify the previous transaction so that child tasks that are created by RUN TRANSID can always be linked back to the parent task that initiated them.
- Monitoring fields are added to show the number of RUN TRANSID and FETCH commands being issued, and also a total count.
- A new monitoring clock timer is added to account for the time a parent user task spends waiting for child tasks to return as a result of FETCH commands.

The addition of these core infrastructure items ensure that business applications utilizing this new asynchronous API can be secured, tracked, and monitored throughout their execution cycles.

Support for channels and containers over EXCI

EXCI is an application programming interface that enables a non-CICS application that runs in MVS™ to call an application that runs in a CICS region and to pass and receive data from that application. The EXCI interface is enhanced to add support for CICS channels and containers. This provides a mechanism to exchange large volumes of structured parameter data between batch applications and CICS applications.

EXCI now supports issuing PUT CONTAINER, GET CONTAINER, MOVE CONTAINER, DELETE CONTAINER, and DELETE CHANNEL commands in batch. A channel can be specified on both the EXEC API (EXEC CICS LINK) and also the call level API (DPL_REQUEST). Channels and containers are supported across multiregion operation (MRO) and MRO/cross-system coupling facility (XCF) communication protocols for both transactional and non-transactional EXCI options.

Channels and containers can also now be used as a way to pass data between separate MVS programs, such as batch applications, even if those applications do not communicate with CICS.

Availability of the CICS TS V5.4 open beta offering

The CICS TS V5.4 open beta offering is available for clients who want to explore potential new CICS capability and assess the value to their business. It can be downloaded free of charge, direct from the [IBM CICS open beta](#) website.

To register interest in future managed CICS TS beta programs contact, by email, the [CICS Early Programs coordinator](#).

IBM software beta programs

IBM software beta programs allow clients to sign up for and acquire early releases of a product for the purposes of testing, before it is made commercially available. Open beta programs do not usually require clients to register before taking part in the program. Typically, product offerings provided by a beta program:

- Are free of charge.
- Are not warranted.
- Have no support of any kind.
- May not be used for productive purposes.
- Contain a disabling device that will prevent it from being used after the test period ends.

Details of the terms and conditions of the software beta program are found in the supplied license files for the offering.

Participants in the beta program gain insight into IBM strategy and direction. They may also afford earlier benefit and payback from new function, and may gain competitive edge and the opportunity for public recognition as a technology leader. Participants are encouraged to provide feedback and articulate their own requirements to IBM, with the potential to help influence and shape future IBM products.

² For information on the July 2016 continuous delivery update of CICS TS V5.3, refer to Software Announcement [216-036](#), dated July 12, 2016.

³ For information on the October 2015 general availability release of CICS TS V5.3, CICS TS Developer Trial V5.3, and CICS TS Value Unit Edition (VUE) V5.3, refer to Software Announcement [215-363](#), dated October 5, 2015.

Section 508 of the US Rehabilitation Act

CICS TS V5.3 and CICS TS V5.4 open beta are capable, when used in accordance with associated IBM documentation, of satisfying the applicable requirements of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, provided that any assistive technology used with the product properly interoperates with it. A US Section 508 Voluntary [Product Accessibility Template \(VPAT\)](#) can be requested.

Statement of direction

IBM makes the following statements of general direction:

- IBM intends to deliver support in CICS TS for Java applications that exploit Java EE 7 Full Platform features in integrated mode.
- IBM intends to deliver support in CICS TS for IBM Cloud Provisioning and Management for z/OS. This support will enable developers to provision services from a software catalog in a way that is consistent with the CICS provisioning toolkit technology delivered in the CICS TS V5.4 open beta offering.

IBM's statements regarding its plans, directions, and intent are subject to change or withdrawal without notice at IBM's sole discretion. Information regarding potential future products is intended to outline our general product direction and it should not

be relied on in making a purchasing decision. The information mentioned regarding potential future products is not a commitment, promise, or legal obligation to deliver any material, code, or functionality. Information about potential future products may not be incorporated into any contract. The development, release, and timing of any future features or functionality described for our products remain at our sole discretion.

Hardware and software support services

SmoothStart/installation services

[IBM Services](#) has the breadth, depth, and reach to manage your services needs. You can leverage the deep technical skills of our [WebSphere[®] lab-based services](#) and the business consulting, project management, and infrastructure expertise of our IBM Global Services team. Also, IBM Services extends our reach through [IBM Business Partners](#) to provide an unmatched portfolio of capabilities. Together, IBM provides the global reach, intellectual capital, industry insight, and technology leadership to support any critical-business need. Further information about [CICS services](#) is also available.

Reference information

IBM Software Announcements

For information on the July 2016 continuous delivery update of CICS TS V5.3, refer to Software Announcement [216-036](#), dated July 12, 2016.

For information on the October 2015 general availability release of CICS TS V5.3, CICS TS Developer Trial V5.3, and CICS TS Value Unit Edition (VUE) V5.3, refer to Software Announcement [215-363](#), dated October 5, 2015.

The following software announcement is relevant to CICS TS V5.3 and includes information on each of the following CICS Tools:

- CICS Configuration Manager for z/OS (CICS CM) V5.3
- CICS Deployment Assistant for z/OS (CICS DA) V5.3
- CICS Interdependency Analyzer for z/OS (CICSIA[®]) V5.3
- CICS Performance Analyzer for z/OS (CICS PA) V5.3

Refer to Software Announcement [215-364](#), dated October 05, 2015

For information on CICS TG V9.2, refer to Software Announcement [216-035](#), dated March 8, 2016..

For information on IBM Explorer for z/OS, V3.0, refer to Software Announcement [215-373](#), dated October 5, 2015.

CICS web pages

For up-to-date information on CICS, refer to the [CICS home page](#).

For the latest information on CICS TS V5.3, refer to the [CICS TS for z/OS home page](#).

The [CICS support web page](#) can be used to search for terms, phrases, error codes, and APAR numbers.

CICS SupportPacs

[CICS SupportPacs](#), which extend and complement CICS TS, are available, free of charge.

Program number

Program number	VRM	Program name
5655-Y04	530	CICS Transaction Server for z/OS
5722-DFJ	530	CICS Transaction Server for z/OS Value Unit Edition
5722-DFK	110	CICS Transaction Server for z/OS Value Unit Edition S&S
5655-Y30	530	CICS Transaction Server for z/OS Developer Trial
5655-Y15	110	CICS Transaction Server for z/OS Developer Trial S&S
5655-BTA	540	CICS Transaction Server for z/OS open beta

Business Partner information

If you are a Direct Reseller - System Reseller acquiring products from IBM, you may link directly to Business Partner information for [BP Attachment for Announcement Letter 216-354](#). A PartnerWorld ID and password are required (use IBMid).

Ordering information

Unlicensed documentation

Product documentation

For CICS TS 5.3, IBM Knowledge Center includes the changes to product documentation as a result of the enhancements described in this announcement. These changes are not provided in other formats or other languages. For details of the product documentation that was provided at general availability of CICS TS 5.3, visit the relevant [IBM Knowledge Center product pages](#).

For the CICS TS V5.4 open beta offering, product documentation is provided in IBM Knowledge Center. This open beta documentation is provided in English only.

Additional information, presented as articles, samples, and other downloads, is available in the [CICS Developer Center](#).

Subsequent updates (technical newsletters or revisions between releases) to the publications shipped with the product will be distributed to the user of record for as long as a license for this software remains in effect. A separate publication order or subscription is not needed.

Customized Offerings

Product deliverables are shipped only via CBPDO and ServerPac. These customized offerings are offered for Internet delivery in countries where Shopz product ordering is available. Internet delivery reduces software delivery time and allows you to install software without the need to handle tapes. For more details on Internet delivery, refer to the [Shopz help information](#).

You choose the delivery method when you order the software. IBM recommends Internet delivery. In addition to Internet and DVD, the supported tape delivery options include:

- 3590
- 3592

Most products can be ordered in ServerPac the month following their availability in CBPDO. z/OS can be ordered via CBPDO and ServerPac at general availability. Many products will also be orderable in a Product ServerPac without also having to order the z/OS operating system or subsystem.

Shopz and CFSW will determine the eligibility based on product requisite checking. For more details on the product ServerPac, visit the Help section on the [Shopz website](#).

For additional information on the Product ServerPac option, refer to Software Announcement [212-272](#), dated July 31, 2012.

Production of software product orders will begin on the planned general availability date.

- CBPDO shipments will begin one week after general availability.
- ServerPac shipments will begin two weeks after general availability.

Terms and conditions

The terms are unaffected by this announcement.

Statement of good security practices

IT system security involves protecting systems and information through prevention, detection, and response to improper access from within and outside your enterprise. Improper access can result in information being altered, destroyed, or misappropriated or can result in misuse of your systems to attack others. Without a comprehensive approach to security, no IT system or product should be considered completely secure and no single product or security measure can be completely effective in preventing improper access. IBM systems and products are designed to be part of a comprehensive security approach, which will necessarily involve additional operational procedures, and may require other systems, products, or services to be most effective. IBM does not warrant that systems and products are immune from the malicious or illegal conduct of any party.

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Electronic Service Agent™ and the IBM Electronic Support web portal are dedicated to providing fast, exceptional support to IBM Systems customers. The IBM Electronic Service Agent tool is a no-additional-charge tool that proactively monitors and reports hardware events, such as system errors, performance issues, and inventory. The Electronic Service Agent tool can help you stay focused on your company's strategic business initiatives, save time, and spend less effort managing day-to-day IT maintenance issues. Servers enabled with this tool can be monitored remotely around the clock by IBM Support, all at no additional cost to you.

Now integrated into the base operating system of AIX® V5.3, AIX V6.1, and AIX V7.1, Electronic Service Agent is designed to automatically and electronically report system failures and utilization issues to IBM, which can result in faster problem resolution and increased availability. System configuration and inventory information

collected by the Electronic Service Agent tool also can be viewed on the secure Electronic Support web portal, and used to improve problem determination and resolution by you and the IBM support team. To access the tool main menu, simply type `smitty esa_main`, and select [Configure Electronic Service Agent](#). In addition, ESA now includes a powerful web user interface, giving the administrator easy access to status, tool settings, problem information, and filters.

The IBM Electronic Support portal is a single Internet entry point that replaces the multiple entry points traditionally used to access IBM Internet services and support. This portal enables you to gain easier access to IBM resources for assistance in resolving technical problems. The My Systems and Premium Search functions make it even easier for Electronic Service Agent tool-enabled customers to track system inventory and find pertinent fixes.

Benefits

Increased uptime: The Electronic Service Agent™ tool is designed to enhance the Warranty or Maintenance Agreement by providing faster hardware error reporting and uploading system information to IBM Support. This can translate to less wasted time monitoring the symptoms, diagnosing the error, and manually calling IBM Support to open a problem record. Its 24x7 monitoring and reporting mean no more dependence on human intervention or off-hours customer personnel when errors are encountered in the middle of the night.

Security: The Electronic Service Agent tool is designed to be secure in monitoring, reporting, and storing the data at IBM. The Electronic Service Agent tool is designed to securely transmit either via the Internet (HTTPS or VPN) or modem to provide customers a single point of exit from their site. Communication is one way. Activating Electronic Service Agent does not enable IBM to call into a customer's system.

For additional information, refer to the [IBM Electronic Service Agent](#).

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Customized support: Using the IBM ID entered during activation, you can view system and support information in the My Systems and Premium Search sections of the [Electronic Support website](#).

My Systems provides valuable reports of installed hardware and software using information collected from the systems by Electronic Service Agent. Reports are available for any system associated with your IBM ID. Premium Search combines the function of search and the value of Electronic Service Agent information, providing advanced search of the technical support knowledgebase. Using Premium search and the Electronic Service Agent information that has been collected from your system, you are able to see search results that apply specifically to your systems.

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For IBM Business Partner: pwcs@us.ibm.com

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